

Department of Home Affairs riddled by mismanagement has spent millions in legal fees

By Joe McGluwa MP – DA Shadow Minister of Home Affairs

Speaker,

The Constitutional Court, like all South Africans, has instructed the State and, in this case, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), to uphold the dignity of South African citizens and their families.

The former Minister of State Security, Honourable Bongani Bongo, should therefore not have been allowed to participate in this budget speech here today because of all the numerous allegations of corruption and bribery against him.

Last week, the Court gave the Department two years to amend foreign spousal visa laws which require foreign spouses or children of South African citizens to leave the country to renew their visas.

Though this is a significant victory. The challenge will, however, remain if the Department takes its own time to fix legislation that could result in the separation of foreign spouses from their families, and once again making refugees and asylum seekers the scapegoats of the Department of Home Affairs' failures

The corruption, bribery, wrongful and unnecessary rejections, and the delaying tactics on the part of officials at Home Affairs have resulted in several frivolous court cases, Honourable Bongo.

The Deputy Minister Njabulo Nzuza, has been tasked with overseeing and driving three "distinct" areas of operation within the Department namely Refugee and Asylum Seekers Management, the Moetapele improvement campaign, and Legal Services.

When it comes to Legal Services, however, the Constitutional Court on many occasions described your Department's litigation as obstructive, floppy, shocking with no conscious towards refugees and asylum seekers, Honourable Deputy Minister.

These comments are damning indictment on a state department.

Deputy Minister, the placement of legal services specialist in the core branches of the Department of Home Affairs are - in your own words – “operating under severe constraint and lack of personnel.”

They have cost this department millions.

Now this same constrained, understaffed and overwhelmed legal department has to defend the legal action and blunders of DHA and in turn becoming a laughing stock against.

Minister, the Department of Home Affairs received a voted allocation of R7.9 billion for the 2018/19 financial year.

Both Government Printing Works and the Independent Electoral Commission including Home Affairs has presented their Annual Performance Plan last week.

The Democratic Alliance (DA) would like to assure you, Minister, that we will proactively monitor the procurement renewal processes of contracts under the Department as well as the investigations related to Visa Facilitation as well as the National Identification System and the Fix Based Operator under Fire Blade Aviation at OR Tambo International Airport.

Minister, this includes allegations of State Capture and early Naturalisation of the Gupta family. Watch this space Honourable Bongo. We will do so because we believe in an open, transparent and principled Government.

The DA is encouraged by the many Home Affairs officials who are working tirelessly to make the Department work for all.

The DA praises all the Advocate Vanara’s, Honourable Bongo, who advocate justice for all.

The DA warns corrupt officials, who prey and exploit innocent immigrants.

Our vision is to see Home Affairs working again.

The DA pledges:

- To ensure South Africa achieves an effective, efficient and coordinated border safety plan, something the ruling ANC, cannot do.
- To attract Foreign Nationals with scarce skills and business to South Africa, something the ruling ANC, cannot do.
- To subscribe at all times to the independence of the IEC, something the ruling ANC, cannot do.

The DA will remain resolute, open, polite, dedicated and transparent to deliver good service to all South Africans.

Minister, corruption is a continued problem within the Department of Home Affairs and at South Africa's borders.

In May 2016, 15 people, including a Deputy Director of the Department of Home Affairs were arrested on charges of fraud and corruption.

Similarly, in March 2017, a further 18 people were arrested in connection with fraud and corruption at the Ficksburg border including 10 police officers and 5 Home Affairs officials.

In 2018 the former Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba lied under oath about the Fireblade saga.

Last but not least, Chairperson, in 2019 the ANC gave South Africans the middle finger by electing Advocate Bongani Bongo as Chairperson of this Committee.